


FRIENDS
OF THE
CORCORAN
25TH
ANNIVERSARY
EXHIBITION



Front cover:
Roger Brown (1941-)
Waterfall 1974
oil on canvas, 72 x 48 in.

THE CORCORAN
GALLERY OF ART,
WASHINGTON, D.C.

MARCH 14 TO
MARCH 30, 1986

SELECTIONS
FROM
ACQUISITIONS
BY THE
FRIENDS
OF THE
CORCORAN
1961-1985

This catalog is dedicated to the memory of *James R. McAlee*,
member of the Board of Directors of the Friends of The Corcoran,
and Chair of Acquisitions 1986.



In the 1961 Annual Report of the Corcoran Gallery, George E. Hamilton, Jr., the president of the Board of Trustees noted a "significant development." It was the formation of the Friends of the Corcoran. Judge Edward A. Beard, the first president of the Friends of the Corcoran expressed his hopes . . . "to develop the interest of the Washington community in contemporary American art, to unify and focalize this interest to the benefit of the Corcoran, which we believe by tradition, by geographic location, and by vitality of policy to be the logical recipient of it . . ." A succession of officers and twenty-five years of active support of the Gallery has followed.

Each year, the pursuit of the Friends of the Corcoran Annual Acquisition has generated great interest and excitement. Hard working committees spend considerable time working with the Gallery's curatorial staff to provide not only a purchase of importance to the collection, but also a process that will broaden the interest in contemporary American art shared by the Friends and others in the Washington community. Each year's process has owed a considerable amount to the chairman of the Friends Acquisition Committee. This year has been no exception. Jim McAlee, who guided this process once before as chairman of the committee in 1981, helped meet the special challenge of the 25th Anniversary year. His untimely death just before the New Year is a loss to us all. We are grateful for his guidance, and believe that we will have every right to be proud of this year's results.

The exhibition that celebrates this anniversary is of necessity an edited version of the fruits of the last twenty-five years. And while each of the purchases makes a particular contribution to the Corcoran's collection, it is the overall commitment that is most important. No collection was ever built, or ever matured to a new level of importance with one purchase. It is the continuity of effort that counts. It is the collective impact of the Friends Acquisition Program — achievements to date and prospects for the future — that is the real legacy of the Friends. Their steady commitment has indeed served to "focalize" our communal energy and attention on contemporary American art — to our benefit.

Michael Botwinick
Director

INTRODUCTION

Twenty-five years ago a small group of dedicated people with a dual interest in modern American art and the future of the Corcoran Gallery of Art had an idea of forming an independent organization for the support of the Gallery. They approached the Board of Trustees and asked that in exchange for an annual donation of one or more works of contemporary American art they be given the privilege of previews of major shows at the Corcoran and other events to be held at the Gallery. The Trustees, who had little money available for purchases, agreed and the Friends of the Corcoran was born. Major credit for this idea goes to the Friends' first two presidents, Judge Edward A. Beard and Sidney S. Zlotnick.

The Friends were to have their own Charter and By-laws. The purpose was to raise money to buy works of art for the Corcoran and to encourage an interest in the private collecting of American art. They were to be governed by a Board of Directors consisting of four officers, with two year terms, and eleven Directors, with staggered three year terms, to be elected by the membership at an annual business meeting to be held each September.

Benefits of membership were the annual participation in the selection of a work of art for the permanent collection of the Gallery, previews (prior to those of the Gallery's general membership) of all major shows at the Gallery and attendance at other events of artistic and social interest. Dues were set at \$100.00.

From the very beginning the venture was a success. In ten months the original group of six grew to one hundred and twenty, and in the first year they presented to the Gallery three works by significant artists of the day.

Because the selection of a gift for the Gallery was considered to be so important a very special procedure was set up for this purpose. An Acquisitions Committee consisting of the President of the Friends, a representative from the Gallery, and six members, three of whom were elected by the membership and three named by the Board of Directors, met and chose three or four works of art to be presented to the membership for its vote at an annual acquisitions' night. The winner went into the permanent collection of the Gallery. In the early years of the Friends these works were usually selected from the Corcoran's Biennial or Area shows. In addition, when an opportunity presented itself, the Acquisitions Committee could recommend to the Board the purchase of additional works and, if funds were available, the Board might approve.

In order to maintain and promote membership the Board worked hard at presenting other events at the Gallery which would appeal to the members. First there were lectures and discussions of the shows with Gallery staff and local art critics. Later outside events were added, such as trips to other museums, visits to private collections and embassy receptions. Initially, because the group was small, all these events were free to the members, with funds provided by the small percentage of the dues allowed to be spent, under I.R.S. regulations, for promotional purposes.

In the fifth anniversary year of the organization, in keeping with the other purpose of the Friends, an exhibition of works from members' collections was presented at the Gallery with a fine sampling of the wealth of art to be found in Washington homes. This was repeated every five years with other exhibitions of American paintings, drawings and sculpture. All were well received. But more importantly, this encouragement of

HISTORY OF THE FRIENDS

private collecting led to several major donations to the Corcoran from individual members.

However, even with all the successful efforts, there were problems. For several years the membership of the Friends failed to grow beyond one hundred and twenty-five. In addition many members, in spite of encouragement from the Board, failed to maintain membership in the Corcoran as well and this displeased the Gallery which began to view the Friends as a competitor for much needed funds.

In an effort to improve matters and end the growing enmity, the Friends approached David Lloyd Kreeger, President of the Board of Trustees, which had been newly reconstituted and enlarged, with an idea to bring about a better relationship. We suggested that the Friends and the hundred dollar category of Corcoran membership (which had also languished for years at the one hundred and twenty-five member level because of the lack of significant benefits) merge and the entire group become a new category of membership to be known as the Friends of the Corcoran. The group would function under the direction of the Friends' Board, but henceforth the money from renewals and new memberships would be divided between the Corcoran and the Friends, who would continue with the same purpose and privileges. After much discussion on both sides this merger became a reality by vote of the Board of Trustees on September 30, 1974.

The wisdom of this decision was almost immediately apparent. In one year this combined membership of 250 grew to 450 as lower paying members of the Corcoran learned, through the monthly calendar, of the benefits to be derived from joining at the higher level. The Friends have continued to grow so that today almost one out of every three members of the Corcoran is a Friend.

Only one problem resulted from this change. Because of the way the dues were divided and the increased cost of providing events for the larger group, it was no longer feasible to have programs which were free and a small charge became necessary for most events. On the other hand, the increased membership permitted the addition of one major program: Friends' trips to such far away places as China, Europe, Russia and South America under the direction of the indefatigable Estelle Bechhoefer.

The Friends can justifiably be proud of their accomplishments over the past twenty-five years which, in addition to the many fine works given to the Gallery, include providing, at the urgent request of the Corcoran, the funds for an Associate Curator of Contemporary Art for the Washington Region in 1978 and the furnishing of a Members' Lounge. For the next twenty-five years: Excelsior!

Dr. Thomas A. Mathews
President 1972-75

HISTORY OF THE FRIENDS

The Friends of the Corcoran commitment to acquisitions has produced a remarkable legacy for the Museum. Naturally enough, the objects which have been added to the Collections — primarily modern works, and by American artists — reflect the shifts and vagaries of contemporary art itself in recent times. Given the inevitable vicissitudes of fashion and taste in any period, it is difficult even for the most highly trained professional curator to select works which both reveal something particular to their time, and endure on their own terms as time passes and their contexts change. It is infinitely more remarkable, then, to achieve a coherent and lastingly appealing group of works of art when its selection is undertaken by various individuals, working together in various combinations and with differing budgets, systems of approach, and curatorial advisors.

Out of the full array of always interesting and often superior art works acquired for the Corcoran by the Friends, we have selected a few to show and reproduce here, which not only stand as beautiful objects, but reflect a range of artistic concerns, during the last twenty-five years, which parallels the Friends' own existence.

Three objects can be said to stand almost as icons in the present contexts of major directions in contemporary American art: the Louise Nevelson *Ancient Secrets*, 1964, Joseph Cornell's *Caravaggio Prince, Medici Slot Machine*, c. 1950, and Hans Hofmann's *Golden Blaze*, 1958. Each of these pieces represents the three artists at their best; each of these artists takes a place in American post-war art which makes him or her virtually an institution.

Two essentially divergent threads in the evolution of American art since the 1950s can be located in the tendencies either toward the elaboration of Hofmann's school of abstract painting, or toward figuration and narrative, a complex movement stemming in part from a few unique, Surrealist-oriented figures like Joseph Cornell. Each of these basic movements is well represented in the body of works gathered here.

The two generations of abstract painters coming out of Hofmann's early abstract expressionist episode include among their foremost ranks such painters as Sam Francis, Jules Olitski, Lawrence Poons, Ron Davis and Bruce Boice. The works by these artists selected for the Corcoran's collection range from classically definitive examples, like Olitski's *Pink Alert*, and Ron Davis' *T-Beam*, to the somewhat more tentative, if vital, works by Francis and Poons. As a group of recent American color paintings, this selection addresses many of the important concerns of this vast and lively phenomenon.

NOTES
ON THE
EXHIBITION

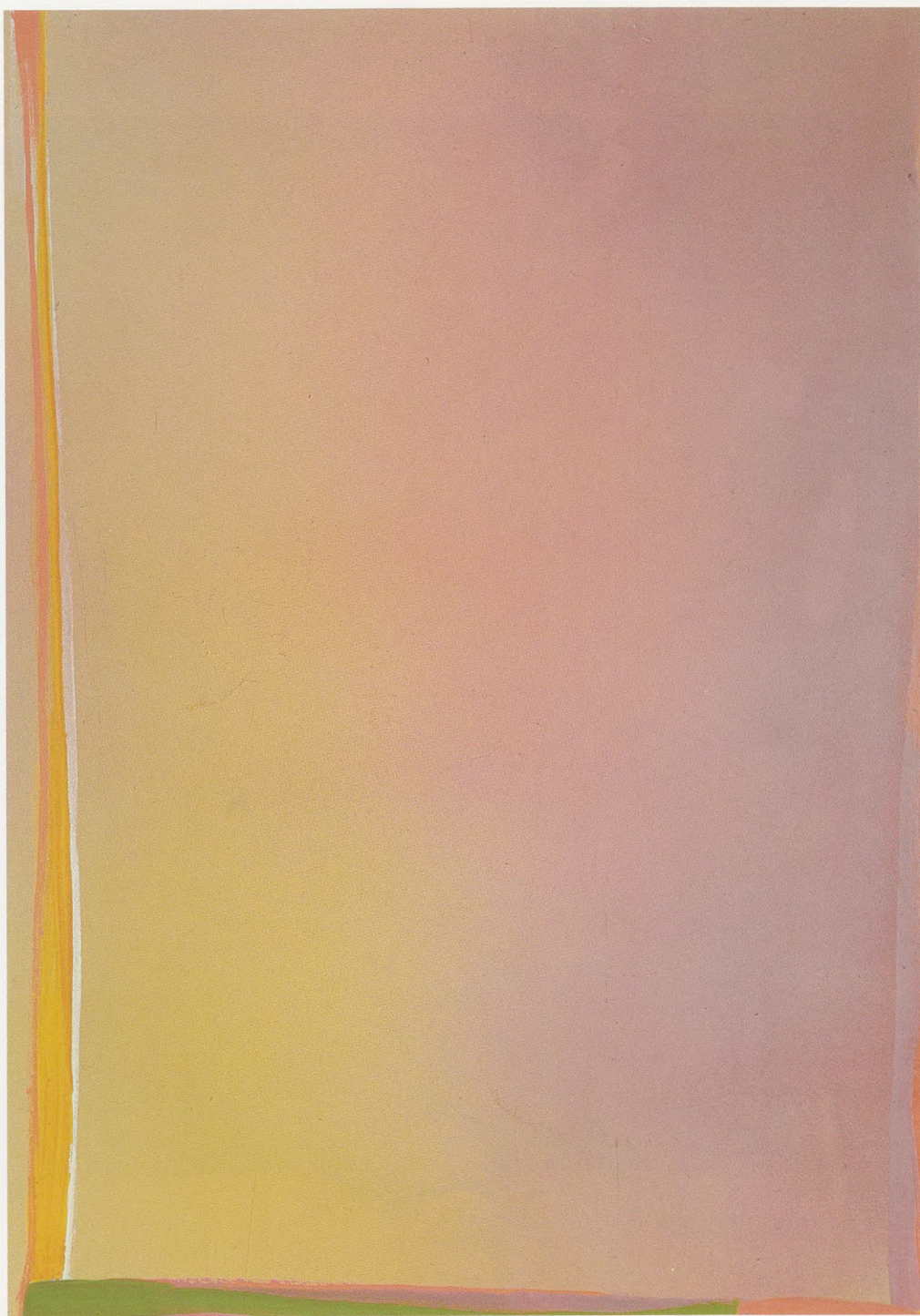
The concurrent development of a multi-faceted imagistic movement in American art is similarly well represented in just four paintings, spanning more than a decade and touching upon "classical new realism," Pop Art, post-minimalist "new image painting," and Chicago School narrative painting. These are exemplified respectively by Philip Pearlstein, Andy Warhol, Neil Jenney and Roger Brown, and serve to touch every important base of this enormous and complex artistic episode. Each example here characterizes a key moment in the overall array of these artists' production.

The twelve works selected for display and reproduction in this Twenty-fifth anniversary celebration of the Friends of the Corcoran are merely a sampling of the whole body of acquisitions. Other pieces, such as those by Richard Pousette-Dart, George L. K. Morris, Jack Youngerman and Nancy Graves, stand as extraordinarily important parts of our permanent collection. The presence, too, of major works by the Washington, D.C. artists Jacob Kainen, Howard Mehring, Joseph Shannon, Brockie Stevenson, Jennie Lea Knight, Ed McGowin, Michael Clark and Willem DeLooper, constitutes in itself an important addition to the museum's holdings.

The works listed here comprise only those acquired for the Corcoran by the Friends as a group. Many other donations, some extraordinarily valuable, have come to us through the generosity of individual members of the Friends. It is testimony both to the vital dependence the Corcoran has upon its volunteer support groups, and to the powerful efficacy of the local community's efforts in our behalf, that we can gather together on this occasion such an impressive cross-section of the museum's collection of modern American art.

Jane Livingston
Associate Director and Chief Curator

NOTES
ON THE
EXHIBITION



Jules Olitski (1922-)
Pink Alert 1966
acrylic on canvas
113 x 80 in.



Hans Hofmann (1880-1966)

Golden Blaze 1958

oil on canvas

72 x 60 in.

Purchased with the generous assistance
of Maxwell Oxman.



Louise Nevelson (1900-)
Ancient Secrets 1964
wood and black paint
74 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 68 x 27 in.



Philip Pearlstein (1924-)
Reclining Nude on Green Couch 1971
oil on canvas
60 x 48 in.



Ronald Davis (1937-)
T Beam 1974
acrylic and dry pigment on canvas
111½ x 144 in.



Andy Warhol (1931-)
Mao 1973
silkscreen and acrylic on canvas
50¼ x 42 in.



Joseph Cornell (1907-1972)
Caravaggio Prince, Medici Slot Machine Variant c. 1950
construction and collage
15½ x 9¾ x 4½ in.



Neil Jenney (1945-)
Coat and Coated 1970
acrylic on canvas
50 x 57¾ in.



Sam Francis (1923-)
Untitled 1974
acrylic on canvas
98¼ x 86½ in.
Purchased with the aid of funds from
the National Endowment for the Arts,
Washington, D.C., a Federal Agency.



Lawrence Poons (1937-)
See 1981
acrylic on canvas
94 x 83 in.
Purchased with the aid of funds from
the National Endowment for the Arts,
Washington, D.C., a Federal Agency.



Bruce Boice (1941-)
The Birth of Tiberius 1983
oil on canvas
82 x 72 in.

1961

Gyorgy Kepes (1906-)
Nature Fabric
oil on canvas, 59¼ x 59¼ in.
61.41

Karl Knaths (1891-1971)
Net Menders 1961
oil on canvas, 40¼ x 50¼ in.
61.42

James Weeks (1922-)
Park Landscape 1960
oil on canvas, 51¾ x 44 in.
61.45

1963

Rico Lebrun (1900-1964)
Night Figures #2 1961
oil on canvas, 78¾ x 108⅝ in.
63.1

Edwin Dickinson (1891-1978)
Still Life with Microscope 1941
oil on canvas, 32 x 28¼ in.
63.22

1965

Stanley D. Edwards (1941-)
Infant on Altar 1964
oil on canvas, 72 x 84 in.
65.3

Richard Pousette-Dart (1916-)
Ramapo Sky 1963
oil on canvas, 50¾ x 75⅜ in.
65.6

George L. K. Morris (1905-1975)
Indian Composition 1942-45
oil on canvas, 63¼ x 49¼ in.
65.21

Keith Martin (1911-)
Oracle 1964
pastel, crayon and charcoal on paper
39⅞ x 30 in.
65.27

1966

Jacob Kainen (1909-)
Mother and Children 1965
oil on canvas, 43½ x 55 in.
66.2

George Rickey (1907-)
Peristyle III 1966
21 blades of stainless steel on base, 40½ x 102¼ x 5¼ in.
66.29

1967

Kenneth Callahan (1906-)
The Waiters 1964
oil on canvas, 43 x 27 in.
67.1

Jules Olitski (1922-)
Pink Alert 1966
acrylic on canvas, 113 x 80 in.
67.12

1968

Sante Graziani (1920-)
Stuart's Red, White and Blue 1965
acrylic on canvas, 44¼ x 44½ in.
68.19

WORKS
OF ART
GIVEN
BY THE
FRIENDS

1969

Hans Hofmann (1880-1966)

Golden Blaze 1958
oil on canvas, 72 x 60 in.
68.37

Purchased with the generous assistance
of Maxwell Oxman.

Louise Nevelson (1900-)

Ancient Secrets 1964
wood and black paint, 74 $\frac{5}{8}$ x 68 x 27 in.
68.41

Jack Youngerman (1926-)

July White 1966
acrylic on canvas, 109 x 79 in.
1969.16

1970

Jack Boul (1927-)

Baltimore Alley 1965
oil on canvas, 24 x 30 in.
1970.15.1

Howard Mehring (1931-1978)

Panu-The-Pandulum 1961
acrylic on canvas, 57 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 58 $\frac{1}{4}$ in.
1970.15.2

Joseph Shannon (1933-)

Freud's Dog 1969
polymer on canvas, 42 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 46 $\frac{1}{2}$ in.
1970.15.3

1971

Thomas Wilfred (1889-1968)

Oriente, op 155 1962
light machine, projected moving image up to 30 feet square,
67 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 32 $\frac{1}{4}$ x 28 in.
1971.6

Philip Pearlstein (1924-)

Reclining Nude on Green Couch 1971
oil on canvas, 60 x 48 in.
1971.7.2

Franklin Owen (1939-)

Mandan #19 1970
acrylic on canvas, 78 x 124 in.
1971.71

1972

Brockie A. Stevenson (1919-)

She's A Mighty Engine III 1969-70
acrylic on canvas, 45 x 189 in.
1972.25

1973

Jennie Lea Knight (1933-)

Roc 1969
pine, 18 x 19 x 14 in.
1973.2

1974

Kay Kurt (1944-)

Licorice 1971-2
oil on canvas, 135 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 73 in.
1974.49

Ed McGowin (1938-)

Children 1967-68
10 pieces of vacuum-formed plexiglass
1974.51

1975

Ronald Davis (1937-)

T Beam 1974
acrylic and dry pigment on canvas, 111 $\frac{1}{2}$ x 144 in.
1975.8

WORKS
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1976

Andy Warhol (1931-)

Mao 1973

silkscreen and acrylic on canvas, 50¼ x 42 in.
1976.44

David Headley (1946-)

Jura 1976

aqua-tec and magna on canvas, 92¼ x 157 in.
1976.45

1977

Michael Clark (1946-)

San Francisco Chinatown Windows 1976

oil on linen, 30 x 36 in.
1977.11

1978

Joseph Cornell (1907-1972)

Caravaggio Prince, Medici Slot Machine Variant c. 1950

construction and collage, 15½ x 9¾ x 4½ in.
1978.10

1979

Willem de Looper (1932-)

Untitled 1979

acrylic on canvas, 72 x 60¼ in.
1979.11

Neil Jenney (1945-)

Coat and Coated 1970

acrylic on canvas, 50 x 57¾ in.
1979.98

1980

Sam Francis (1923-)

Untitled 1974

acrylic on canvas, 98¼ x 86½ in.
1980.95

Purchased with the aid of funds from the
National Endowment for the Arts,
Washington, D.C., a Federal Agency.

1981

Lawrence Poons (1937-)

Seel 1981

acrylic on canvas, 94 x 83 in.
1981.107

Purchased with the aid of funds from the
National Endowment for the Arts,
Washington, D.C., a Federal Agency.

1983

Nancy Graves (1940-)

Consequence 1982

oil on canvas, 80 x 63 in.
1983.8

1984

Bruce Boice (1941-)

The Birth of Tiberius 1983

oil on canvas, 82 x 72 in.
1984.8

1985

Roger Brown (1941-)

Waterfall 1974

oil on canvas, 72 x 48 in.
1985.13

WORKS
OF ART
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FRIENDS

FRIENDS OF THE CORCORAN

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CORCORAN

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